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UNCLAS HARARE 000912

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER
USDOC FOR AMANDA HILLIGAS
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON, ERIC LOKEN

E. O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: Black farmer group reacts to white overtures

Ref: Harare 849

1. (SBU) Summary: With pressures from Zimbabwe's next parliamentary elections mounting, the mostly black Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU) told us it would have to reach a break-through in talks with the mostly white Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) in the next month or so, or wait until after elections. End summary.

2. (SBU) Econoff recently spoke to ICFU President Davison Mugabe at length about talks he has had with CFU President Doug Taylor-Freeme (ref). Mugabe said he wants talks to move forward and shares the vision of a multiracial Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union. Mugabe told us he has put out "feelers" within the GOZ to gauge official support. However, he said the rival farmer bodies would have to make progress in talks within the next month or so. Beyond that, he is afraid election-induced political pressures would weigh too heavily on the ICFU for it to be able to move into this direction.

3. (SBU) Mugabe acknowledged his ICFU would benefit enormously from CFU know-how and resources. Yet he harbors palpable bitterness toward the white farmer group. He referred to white farmers repeatedly as "arrogant," unwilling to become Zimbabweans. He said CFU leaders would have to distance themselves more visibly from the more confrontational Justice for Agriculture (JAG) as well as acts of white farmer violence. (White farmer Peter Spero-Landos alleged shot dead settler Mike Mufambi last month.)

Comment

4. (SBU) While chances for immediate success are not great, the Embassy will continue to encourage dialogue among the groups. Ultimately, we believe the GOZ would have to lend support to a CFU-ICFU merger. Before signing on, the ICFU would need the GOZ's official blessing; the CFU would want assurance the remaining 600 white farms would remain untouched. This would not sit well with some GOZ hardliners, nor would it match State media propaganda that any problems with the land redistribution program are due to the sabotage and resistance of white farmers.

Sullivan